

## "SHOOTING AT THE STORM"

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On the southwest coast of Africa lives a tribe of black savages that call themselves the "Namaquas." The men wear no clothing, usually. The women wear a little apron made of the skin of an animal.

As simple, primitive and brutal, perhaps, as any savages on earth, excepting the tiny black dwarfs that hide in the tropical forest, these Namaquas represent well the beginning of human life. In their language there is no word to express gratitude. They have no idea of any God, except their vague belief that there exists a Being able to kill them. This Being they think can be pleased and made less ferocious by sacrifices.

It would take many pages of this newspaper to give, in words, as good an idea of savage thought as Mr. McCay gives in this powerful cartoon, based on an old wood-cut made from the drawing of an African traveller.

"Thirst shall parch thy tongue, and thy body shall waste through lack of sleep and sustenance, ere thou canst describe in words that which painting instantly sets forth before the eye."

That was written by Leonardo da Vinci, the greatest artist that ever lived except Michael Angelo, one of the greatest in power and vision of all the men that have lived on the earth.

You read the character of men in their fears, their hatreds and superstitions. You know much about the Namaquas savages when told that in all their language there is no word to express gratitude or thanks. They live under the fierce tropical sun against which their race, at fearful odds, has fought through the centuries. They suffer for lack of water, and when rain comes, the fearful torrential storm of the tropics, their fields are flooded, and sometimes cattle that had been bellowing for water are swept away in the torrent.

The savages of Africa had first of all to fight and conquer the burning sun, hence the black skin that keeps off the deadly "actinic rays" that would quickly destroy any white race in their climate, and the thick, woolly hair, saturated with grease, protecting the skull from the heat and the deadly effect of those same rays.

As we think of different kinds of human beings, let us judge them by the conditions under which they live, whether they be Eskimos near the North Pole or men like these Namaquas at the Equator.

Self-satisfied ignorance is horrified at the Eskimo eating enormous quantities of rank, fat whale blubber. Any race transferred to the Arctic Circle would do that or die. Ignorance despises the black skin and woolly hair of the African. Any white race transferred to the African tropics would develop such skin and hair, or it would die.

UNDERSTAND what you are discussing, as far as possible, before discussing it. An eagle cannot understand a turtle, or a turtle an eagle. And the cow, mildly grazing, cannot understand either. Every human being that despises another, no matter what that other may be, simply represents the animal expression of prejudice based on ignorance.

Without the thunderstorm and the lightning and the rain that comes with them, the Namaquas and their cattle would die of thirst. But they hate and fear the lightning, as some foolish little boys hate the teacher that brings useful information. Welcoming the rain, these savages dip their arrows in poison and, in spite of their terror, go out in hundreds to shoot at the clouds from which the lightning flashes.

Some of them, occasionally, are struck dead by the lightning that they seek so foolishly to injure. If they had stayed in their huts, content to let nature have her way, taking the good with the bad, the lightning with the rain, they would have been safer.

When the storm is over, these poor black people imagine that their arrows have driven it away and that they have managed to get the welcome rain and at the same time be rid of the dangerous thunderbolt.

Human beings of our kind, the so-called "civilized," go through in their childhood all the various phases through which the savages pass in their manhood. Little boys, as every teacher and every father whose eyes are not blinded knows, are cruel, inclined to take what does not belong to them, and then inclined to tell what is not true about it. That is simply the savage coming forth in the child. Every savage is cruel, steals and lies.

They are foolish who imagine children are born floor on which they have bumped their heads, fear-

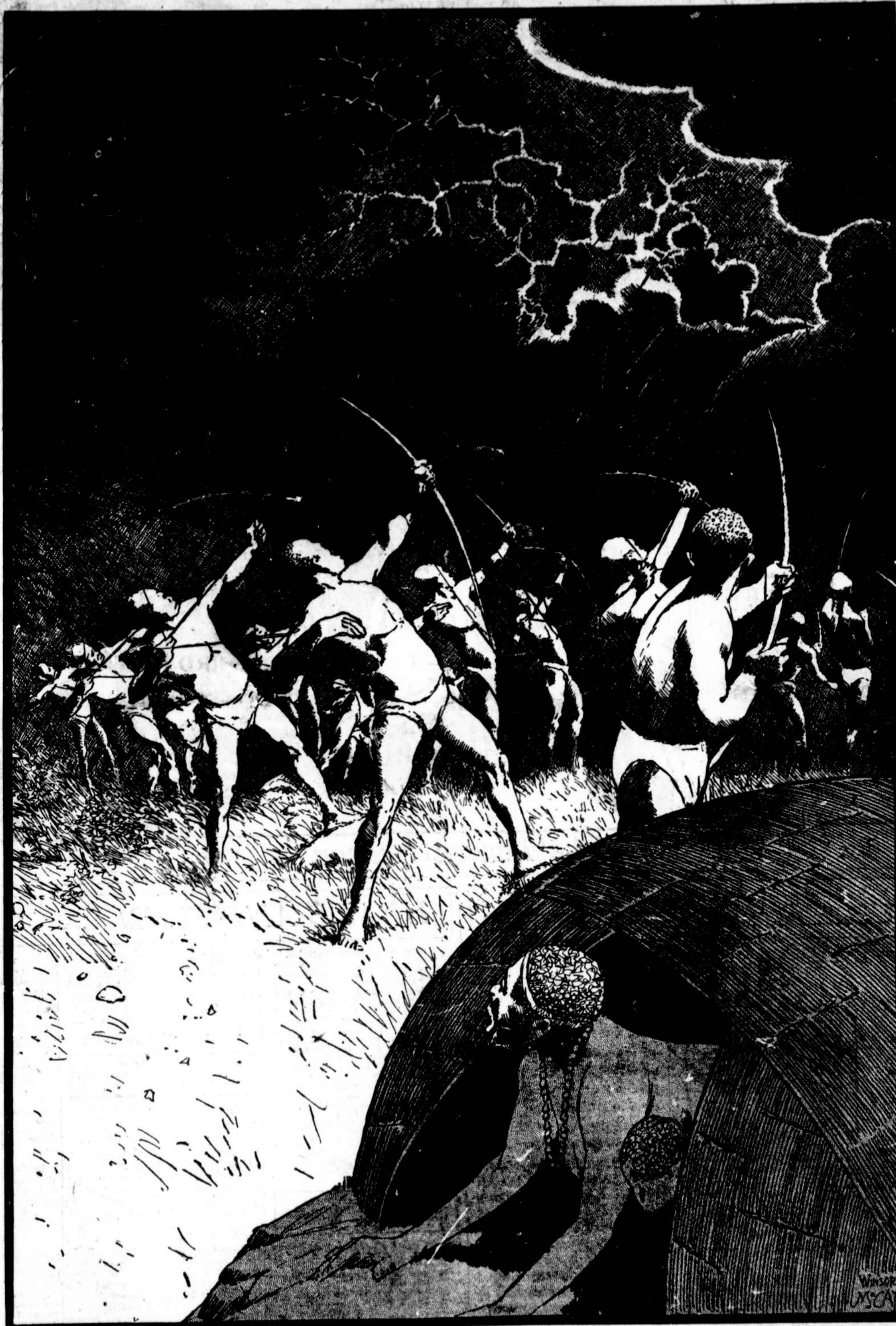
absolutely good. They are born LITTLE SAVAGES and are certain to go through various savage phases of life. The duty of parents is to help them through, enlightening them, and finishing the savage process as easily as can be done.

Just as children pass mentally through various savage conditions in their childhood, hitting the

ing the dark and all sorts of ghosts that do not exist, so our human bodies, before birth, pass through the various phases of animal life on the earth, from the single cell, invisible to the naked eye, to the fully developed embryo. An understanding of embryology, the life that precedes birth, and of the savage character, naturally and inevitably showing itself in early childhood, should be part of the mental equip-

ment of every parent responsible for the care of children.

We need not go back to childhood to see ourselves in these savages shooting their poisoned arrows at the lightning. How naturally we oppose that which is strange to us. How we attack and belittle a new idea, a man ahead of his time with a new thought to offer,



Study a young child, you learn the emotions and character that underlie manhood. Study primitive savages and learn the beginnings of the human race to which we belong.

This excellent picture of the African "Namaquas" shooting their arrows at the lightning which they fear,

and at the same time praying for the rain that the lightning seems to bring, is an excellent picture of human superstition and contradiction.

Many of us, like the Namaquas savage, rebel, with our little arrows of thought, against that which is above us and far beyond our strength.

In all history, wherever you see a man with a new, valuable thought, a Galileo, Kepler or Columbus, you see also around him people that mock him, and that are, in fact, no better than these poor savages shooting at the lightning.

Mr. McCay's picture is useful because it takes our minds to another climate, another race, and to other conditions. It is a "change of climate" for our thought, a change as important as to the body itself.

In these days of old beliefs and occasional new religions, it will interest you, showing how our various theories have grown up, to read something of what these west coast savages believe.

No Namaqua will eat a rabbit or a hare. If a man has even warmed his hands at a fire where this hare has been cooked he must be purified before others will have anything to do with him. This fact will interest many people in the United States who are aware of this ancient, widespread prejudice against the rabbit.

The Namaquas' objection to the rabbit is told as follows:

"It seems that in former days, when men were first made, the hare had no cleft in his lip. The moon sent a hare to the newly created beings with this message: 'As I die and am born again, so you shall die and be born again.'

"The hare, however, delivered the message wrongly: 'As I die and am NOT born again, so you shall die and NOT be born again.' The moon, angry at the hare's disobedience, threw a stick at it as it fled away from his wrath and split its lip open.

"From that time the hare has a cleft lip and is always running away. In consequence of this legend the Namaquas will not eat the hare."

Whether the Namaquas believed that whatever the hare said was final, and that because he made a mistake they could NOT be born again, we do not know. But the legend of the hare in which they firmly believe is not much more ridiculous than some ideas of our own.

Like all savages, and many that consider themselves civilized, the Namaquas believed in witchcraft, magical transformations, and so on. The witch doctors of the Namaquas are supposed to change themselves into animals of different kinds, and the Namaquas believe that all Bushmen, undersized desert savages, possess the same power. They tell this story of a Namaqua travelling with a Bush woman, the woman carrying a child. The Namaqua, seeing zebras at a distance, said to the woman, "You can change yourself into an animal, make yourself into a lion, kill one of those zebras, that we may eat." The woman replied, "You will be afraid to see me."

"No, no," replied the man. "I am afraid of dying of hunger, but not of you."

Whilst he was speaking, hair began to appear at the back of the woman's neck, her nails assumed the appearance of claws and her appearance altered. She set down the child. The man, alarmed at the change, climbed up a tree close by, while the woman glared at him fearfully, and, going to one side, she threw off her skin petticoat, when a perfect lion rushed out into the plain.

It bounded and crept among the bushes toward the wild horses, and, springing on one of them, it fell, and the lion lapped its blood. The lion then came back to the place where the child was crying, and the man called from the tree:

"Enough! Enough! Do not hurt me. Put off your lion's shape. I will never ask to see this again." The lion looked at him and growled. "I'll remain here until I die!" exclaimed the man, "if you do not become a woman again." The mane and tail began to disappear, the lion went toward the bush where the skin petticoat lay, it was slipped on, and the woman in her proper shape took up the child. The man descended, partook of the horse's flesh, but never again asked the woman to catch game for him.

The Namaquas story may have something to do with the fact that the savages do all the hunting themselves and make the women do the hard, dull work of the hut and the fields while they go out to kill animals.

In any case, as you look at this picture of the savages, shooting poisoned arrows at the lightning, and read the strange story of the hare, which is part of their religion, and of the woman changing herself into a lion, you understand how we, who call ourselves civilized, are gradually climbing up through superstition and strange beliefs to REAL civilization. THAT IS STILL MANY CENTURIES AWAY FROM US.